



HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

NEWS RELEASE

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: 11.30.04

CONTACT: Alicia Whitehead, Office: 713-495-7906, Pager: 713-607-3930

Heating Safety Tips: Stay Back 3 Feet

The Houston Fire Department urges citizen's to use extra caution if they decide to use supplemental heating sources to keep warm. Any shift away from the exclusive use of central heating presents an increased possibility for fire. From October 1, 2003 to October 1, 2004 there were 17 space heater related fires in the City of Houston. Remember, space heaters need space. Any combustible item should be at least three feet away from heaters.

Some safety tips that we recommend are:

- Properly install and maintain a smoke detector.
- Never leave children unattended in a room or home with a space heater.
- Keep all combustible materials and yourself, at least three feet away from the heater.
- Open-faced heaters should have a proper screen and grates in place.
- Provide adequate ventilation, opening a window slightly (one-inch) to prevent carbon monoxide buildup.
- If your flame is not blue, it is not burning properly. It is producing Carbon Monoxide, which can't be seen, smelled or tasted. **TURN IT OFF!**
- Use flexible metal tubing with threaded ends to connect the heater to the gas valve. There should be a cutoff valve for the heater at the wall. Never use a rubber hose to connect a space heater to the gas valve!
- Use soapy water to check all connections and valves for leaks. **NEVER** use a match to test for a gas leak!
- Look for the American Gas Association label and follow the manufacturer's recommendations for proper usage.

Vented Gas / Fired Heating Appliances Tips - Central heating units, floor furnaces, recessed wall heaters, and vented space heaters.

- Inspect annually by a qualified service technician. Don't wait for cold weather!
- Do not use these type units without a proper vent pipe. Vent pipes must exhaust to the outside!

Electric Heaters Tips

- Never overload outlets or breakers.
- Don't use extension cords for the heater. If the cord is hot to the touch, turn off the heater and unplug it!
- Electric heaters permanently installed in the wall or ceiling should have lint and dust removed regularly. Lint and dust will burn!

This information may also be found at www.houstonfire.com.

